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HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY ABOUT GROWING OUR OWN

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers says his department’s participation in a student career fair, earlier this month, is all about growing our own employees.

“In 2006, this government announced we would be developing a Health Human Resource Strategy to meet the growing needs of service delivery and increase access to health services for all Yukon residents,” Cathers said. “We have introduced many initiatives to support those already studying in a wide variety of health professions. We are supporting new graduates to return to Yukon. Our participation in career days gives us a new, expanded focus from health, to health and social services.”

The career fair at F.H. Collins was organized in partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and drew together students from high schools in the city to offer a broad selection of career options for students to consider.

Jan Horton is the department’s coordinator for the Health Human Resource Strategy. “We need to think of ways to encourage young people to enter fields in areas that will benefit all of us in the future,” Horton said. “The department’s ‘career hunt’ campaign is bright, attractive and hopefully catches the students’ eyes. I don’t know if kids are even aware of career possibilities like youth probation work or health promotion but if we can show them that careers like these are open to them, it may catch their interest and start them on a career path.”

One of the initiatives the department is introducing this year for Yukon students is an option for job shadowing which provides opportunities to meet with individuals in certain fields to talk about the jobs.

“We recognize that kids may not know what an environmental health officer or a paramedic does. Through our human resources department, we are offering the opportunity to shadow someone in the position of their choice,” Horton added.

The minister said that as the territory’s population ages, younger employees will be required to step into those positions left vacant.

“I think it is a very positive thing that we are recognizing this audience and trying to reach out and help them make decisions about what career path they may want to consider. This is a positive step in attracting young people into these positions in the future that fits in with other government succession planning initiatives,” Cathers said.

The department will also be attending other career fairs over the coming months. Financial support for the Health Human Resource Strategy comes from the Territorial Health Access Fund.

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